



If you've never had a rhythm for family devotions, this is a wonderful time to begin. It could likely be a rhythm that continues for years to come.

## WHY FAMILY DEVOTIONS?

You probably don't need much convincing, but just in case, here are a few reminders. In the beginning God didn't create nations, empires, denominations or even churches. He created a family and intentionally surrounded children with leaders to help remind them of his promises and his design for the world. God created a good world and entrusted a family with the mission of multiplying both his creation and his character. The family was God's brilliant idea!

It's evident that when we are left to ourselves, humans tend to be selfish and sinful. Moreover, throughout history, when God's people neglect to pass along God's truths, bad things happen. But the beauty of God's design of the family is found in the relationship. Families are like baking...you get out of it what you put into it. Parenting is a stewardship. Thankfully, we have a pre-made seedbed for multiplying his character and truth through our everyday conversations and interactions with our children. You will never regret leaning in to love your children by teaching them God's truth.

And the amazing thing is, it doesn't have to happen over night. God blessed us with about 18 years with our child. That's 936 weeks. 157,248 hours. 567,648,000 seconds. Long story short, every moment counts, which means you don't have to stress about the missed moments if your goal is presence and relationship. Lean into more moments over time instead of more moments at one time. It's all about the relationship.

## FAMILY DEVOTIONAL TIPS

1. **Find the right rhythm** (time of day, length of devotion...etc.)
2. **Find the right Bible story book**
3. **Keep it consistent** (daily or weekly)
4. **Keep it flexible**

Don't be afraid to change it up. A special devotional spot is a good thing but it's also a great thing when children can connect various spots to learning God's truth.

# AGE APPROPRIATE DEVOTIONAL GOALS

## ZERO-ONE YEARS

You may not think your baby is listening, but she is. Babies are deeply impressionable. A baby's biggest question is "Am I safe?". Embrace being present with your little one by creating rhythms that introduce them to sight, sound and safety. You are creating a safe space where your baby knows he or she is welcome and loved. It's a space they will learn they can return to again and again.

Think about it this way. You are slowly packing your child's bags with every step and every conversation. With that said, even though they won't respond, create a rhythm of healthy conversation with your baby. Start with short affirmations such as, "God made you, God loves you, and Jesus wants to be your friend forever." Create daily moments centered around reading short 1-2 page Bible stories and singing simple one verse songs. As your child grows you will know when you're ready to move to a new rhythm. Things that worked at 3 months most likely will not work at 11 months.

Remind your child of God's character by using encouraging words and appropriate, gentle touch. There is a direct correlation to the things we remember and the places we continually put our minds and our hearts. Never forget that things that get repeated find their way into our hearts. That's why repetition is a wonderful gift from God. Leverage the repetition.

### GOALS:

- 2-3 minutes
- 1-2 pages
- Pictures Bibles
- Short one sentence prayers

### Bible Story Books

- [Frolic First Bible](#)
- [Jesus Storybook Bible](#)
- [The Beginner's Bible](#)
- [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)

## ONE-TWO YEARS

Picture books are great at this phase! Toddlers are still developing skills for comprehension and application. That's why the more senses they use, the more they will remember.

At this phase, your child may want wiggle a little. It's okay. Let them wiggle. Some children learn better when they wiggle. Encourage them to sit, but don't be a stickler for only sitting. Some kids learn best standing on their head. But if it helps, find the moments of the day when they are most willing to sit. It may be in the morning, right before nap, or after bath time. Leverage the moments in your favor. Don't be afraid to change it up. A special devotional spot is good but it's also a great when children can connect various spots to learning God's truth.

Bible stories with 1-2 pages and lots of pictures will be your friend at this phase. It may take longer than a couple minutes to read short stories because your child goes on tangents as they begin to use words and make sounds. Trust they are learning even in the tangents.

Leverage the opportunity for repetition here. If you find a Bible story book that sticks, chances are your child will want to hear the stories over and over.

**GOALS:**

- 2-3 minutes
- 1-2 pages
- Picture Bibles
- Questions kids can answer in one word
- Short one sentence prayers

**Bible Story Books**

- [Frolic First Bible](#)
- [Jesus Storybook Bible](#)
- [The Beginner's Bible](#)
- [The Toddler's Bible](#)
- [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)

## THREE-FOUR YEARS

This phase is all about asking why. “Why did that person hurt that man, mommy?” “Why is Adam not wearing any clothes, daddy?” “Why did God give us belly buttons?” The quickest way to a preschooler’s heart is not to answer their question completely with three points and a reference but to let them know you heard them and give them a little more knowledge than what they knew before. Don’t be ashamed if you don’t know the answer. Say, “We’ll figure it out together, buddy!”

Imagination is reality at this phase. Kids need to know the authors of the Bible recorded actual events. It’s okay to tell your child Jesus told parables and some of those may or may not have happened. When it comes to Bible stories at this age, it’s good to start with, “Here’s another amazingly true story from the Bible!” Or maybe, “God’s words are right and true; God’s words are always there to help you.”

Find a Bible story book that has great pictures and short hands-on activities that help connect the principle of the story to something they know. This is why Jesus spoke in parables. He spoke their language. Imagine if we decided to speak our child’s language!

**GOALS:**

- 5-10 minutes
- 3-5 pages
- Picture Bibles
- Hands-on devotionals
- Questions kids can answer in a few words
- Let your child pray short one to two sentence prayers

**Bible Story Books**

- [My First Hands-on Bible](#)
- [Jesus Storybook Bible](#)
- [The Beginner's Bible](#)
- [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)
- [Bible Storybook from The Bible App for Kids](#)

## KINDERGARTEN-1ST GRADERS

This phase is all about silly, long run-on sentences. Kids at this age will shout and giggle for no reason. They love humor and adventure. But this also means they are captured by a good story. They want your attention but you also have their attention if you tell good story that makes them giggle, cry or leaves them wondering what’s going to happen next.

Find a good Bible Story book that engages your child’s thirst for adventure and movement. Let kids try reading parts of the devotional. This gives them ownership and allows them to use their hard earned skills from school.

**GOALS:**

- 10-12 minutes
- 5-7 pages
- Picture Bibles
- Hands-on devotionals
- Comic Book Bibles
- Questions that kids can answer in one sentence

**Bible Story Books**

- [Hands-On Bible for Kids](#)
- [Jesus Storybook Bible](#)
- [Laugh and Learn Bible for Little Ones](#)
- [The Action Bible 52 Week Devotional](#)

**SECOND-THIRD GRADERS**

Kids at this age want all things to be fair. “But mommy, he’s got more than me!” “Johny’s mom let him do it, why can’t I?” This is a great chance to leverage their thirst for justice by introducing them to the truths of God’s words. Use Bible stories not as manipulation to point out faults but as pathways to truth where kids make connections between God’s truths and their actions.

Kids at this age are very visual. Don’t be afraid to use comic book Bible stories. Be sure to check the accuracy before using just any old comic book bible story.

Let your child ask tons of questions at this age. They may think more scientifically at this age and need more engaging answers than when they were younger. Asking appropriate questions about how the people in the Bible stories felt can be a great opportunity for children at this phase to put them in someone else’s shoes.

**GOALS:**

- 10-12 minutes
- 5-7 pages
- Hands-on devotionals
- Comic Book Bibles
- More open ended questions with paragraph long answers.

**Bible Story Books**

- [Hands-On Bible for Kids](#)
- [Jesus Storybook Bible](#)
- [The Action Bible 52 Week Devotional](#)
- [The Action Bible](#)